

## Insights to Digital Marketing Strategies

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### ARTICLE DETAILS

#### Article History

Published Online: 14 February 2018

#### Keywords

Digital marketing, tools and techniques

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### ABSTRACT

Digital marketing or electronic marketing is the marketing and promotion of goods and services using electronic mediums such as internet. Through the platform of digital marketing the barriers related to geographical distance are eliminated and other cost related advantages are also availed by the sellers. With the modernisation of population and advent of technology, digital marketing has over ruled traditional marketing concept. This article focuses on the tools and techniques which the concept of digital marketing adopts in order to boost up the sales, revenue and further the customer base. These techniques will enable the marketers to device successful digital marketing campaigns. Also a combination of such tools can be used by the companies to promote their brand over the World Wide Web. Moreover emphasis has been given on the use of digital marketing for success of companies as it has enormous opportunities to be explored in future. Future expectations of the consumer will pull the brand owners and vendors into the digital world and therefore the digital marketing strategies suggested in the article will lead such merchants to dazzling heights.

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### INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing is a type of marketing widely used to endorse products or services and to reach consumers using digital channels. Digital marketing is quite wider term than internet marketing, which includes those channels also, that do not require the use of Internet. It includes mobile phones (both MMS and SMS), social media marketing, display advertising, search engine marketing and many other forms of digital media. Consumers can access information any time and any place where ever they need, through digital means. Consumers do not just rely on what the marketers say about their brand but also they can follow what the media, friends, associations, peers, etc., are saying as well, because of the presence of digital means. Digital marketing is a term that refers to several promotional techniques set out to reach customers via digital technology. Digital marketing represents a widespread range of services, products and brand marketing tactics which mainly use Internet as a fundamental promotional medium in addition to mobile and traditional TV and radios. The promotion of products or brands via one or more forms of electronic media. For example, advertising mediums that might be used as part of the digital marketing strategy of a business could include promotional efforts made via the Internet, social media, mobile phones and electronic billboards, as well as via digital and television and radio channels.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It has been found that enormous research has been done in the field of digital marketing. Canon iMage Gateway helps consumers in sharing their digital images with their friends online. Loreal's brand Lancome uses email newsletters to remain in touch with the customers and tries to strengthen the customer brand loyalty (Merisavo et al., 2004). It has been

found that with e-mails and messages, magazine publishers can activate and drive their customers into Internet, to improve re-subscription rate (Merisavo et al., 2004). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) indicated that marketers progressively bring brands closer to consumers' everyday life. The changing role of customers as co-producers of value is becoming increasingly important. Khan and Mahapatra (2009) remarked that technology plays a very important role in improving the quality of services provided by the business units. According to Hoge (1993), electronic marketing is a transfer of goods or services from seller to buyer involving one or more electronic methods or media. E-Marketing began with the use of telegraphs in the nineteenth century. With the invention and mass acceptance of the telephone, radio, television, and then cable television, electronic media has become the dominant marketing force. McDonald's uses online channel to reinforce brand messages and relationships. They have built online communities for children, such as the Happy Meal website with educative and entertaining games to keep customers always close to themselves (Rowley 2004). Reinartz and Kumar (2003) found that the number of mailing efforts by the company is positively linked with company profitability over time. The primary advantages of social media marketing is reducing costs and enhancing the reach. The cost of a social media platform is typically lower than other marketing platforms such as face-to-face sales or sales with a help of middlemen or distributors. In addition, social media marketing allows firms to reach customers that may not be accessible due to temporal and locational limitations of existing distribution channels. Generally, main advantage of social media is that it can enable companies to increase reach and reduce costs (Watson et al. 2002; Sheth & Sharma 2005). According to Chaffey (2011), social media marketing involves "encouraging customer communications on company's own website or through its social presence". Social media marketing is one important technique in digital marketing as companies can use

social media form to distribute their messages to their target audience without paying for the publishers or distributor that is characteristic for traditional marketing. Digital marketing, electronic marketing, e-marketing and Internet marketing are all similar terms which, simply put, refer to “marketing online whether via websites, online ads, opt-in emails, interactive kiosks, interactive TV or mobiles” (Chaffey & Smith, 2008). Giese and Gote (2000) finds that customer information satisfaction (CIS) for digital marketing can be conceptualized as a sum of affective response of varying intensity that follows consumption and is stimulated by focal aspects of sales activities, information systems (websites), digital products/services, customer support, after-sales service and company culture. Waghmare (2012) pointed out that many countries in Asia are taking advantage of e-commerce through opening up, which is essential for promoting competition and diffusion of Internet technologies. Zia and Manish (2012) found that currently, shoppers in metropolitan India are being driven by e-commerce: these consumers are booking travels, buying consumer electronics and books online. Although spending per online buyer remains low, some 59% of online consumers in metropolitan India already make purchases online at least once in a month. Dave Chaffey (2002) defines e-marketing as “application of digital technologies - online channels (web, e-mail, databases, plus mobile/wireless & digital TV) to contribute to marketing activities aimed at achieving profit acquisition and customers retention (within a multi-channel buying process and customer lifecycle) by improving customer knowledge (of their profiles, behavior, value and loyalty drivers) and further delivering integrated communications and online services that match customers’ individual needs. Chaffey’s definition reflects the relationship marketing concept; it emphasizes that it should not be technology that drives e-marketing, but the business model. All types of social media provide an opportunity to present company itself or its products to dynamic communities and individuals that may show interest (Roberts & Kraynak, 2008). According to Gurau (2008), online marketing environment raises a series of opportunities and also challenges for social media marketing practitioners.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of this paper is to identify the effectiveness of digital marketing in the competitive market. The supportive objectives are following:

1. To give the readers insights to digital marketing strategies.
2. To suggest some of the tools and techniques for digital marketing.

**INSIGHT TO DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY**

Formulating a digital marketing strategy will help companies or brands to make informed decisions about their foray into the digital marketing arena and ensure that their efforts are focused on the elements of digital marketing that are most relevant to their business. It is crucial to understand for

companies how the constantly evolving digital marketplace relates to their brand or product and how it affects the relationship between your business or brand and your customers and prospects. Without a coherent strategy of engagement and retention through digital channels business is at top missing a golden opportunity and at worst could be left behind, watching its competitors pull away across an ever-widening digital divide. Unlike conventional forms of mass media marketing, the internet is unique in its capacity to both broaden the scope of marketing reach of companies and narrow its focus at the same time. Using digital channels companies can transcend traditional constraints like geography and time zones to connect with a much wider audience. At the same time, digital technology allows marketers to sharpen their marketing message with laser-like precision to target very specific niche segments within that wider market. Implemented effectively, it can be an incredibly powerful.

Digital marketing strategy builds on and adapts the principles of traditional marketing, using the opportunities and challenges offered by the digital medium. A digital marketing strategy should be constantly iterating and evolving. Since the Internet allows for near-instantaneous feedback and data gathering, digital marketers should constantly be optimizing and improving their online marketing efforts. User-centric thinking, which involves placing the user at the core of all decisions, is vital when looking at building a successful digital marketing strategy. The digital marketing strategist of today is offered not only a plethora of new tactical possibilities, but also unprecedented ways of measuring the effectiveness of chosen strategies and tactics. Digital also allows greater opportunities for interaction and consumer engagement than were possible in the past, so it is important to consider the ways in which the brand can create interactive experiences for consumers, not just broadcast messages. The fact that digital marketing is highly empirical is one of its key strengths. Almost everything can be measured: from behaviors, to actions and action paths, to results. This means that the digital marketing strategist should start thinking with return on investment (ROI) in mind. Built into any strategy should be a testing framework and the ability to remain flexible and dynamic in a medium that shifts and changes as user behaviours do. If we defined strategy as ‘a plan of action designed to achieve a particular outcome’, the desired outcome of a digital marketing strategy would be aligned with organization’s overall business and brand-building objectives or challenges.

**COMPARISON OF DIGITAL MARKETING WITH TRADITIONAL MARKETING**

Although both the concepts digital and traditional marketing are serving the need of marketers to boost up their sales and increase the revenue. But still with the advent of technology, digital marketing is spreading its roots throughout the world and capturing the interest and attention of marketers and customers all over. Some of the prominent points which distinguish digital marketing from traditional marketing are as follows:

Basis	Traditional Marketing	Digital Marketing
Meaning	Traditional marketing is a process of marketing the products and services for increasing the awareness via newspapers, pamphlets, radios, flex boards.	Digital marketing is a process of marketing the products and services for increasing the awareness via electronic media like computers, laptops, smart phones and Internet.

Marketing Cost	Traditional marketing involves advertising through TV, newspapers etc. which are too costly.	Digital Marketing is cheap and even can be started when someone has good understanding of marketing techniques.
Measurement	In traditional marketing, marketer doesn't get accurate data or it is hard to calculate the engagement.	In digital marketing, complete data of reach, engagement, activities, interest and actions taken by users can be generated.
Mediums of advertising	Traditional marketing includes print, broadcast, direct mail, and telephone.	Digital marketing includes online advertising, email marketing, social media, text messaging, affiliate marketing, search engine optimization, pay per click.
Coverage	Success of traditional marketing strategies can be celebrated if the firm can reach large local audience.	Success of digital marketing strategies can be celebrated if the firm reaches large audience worldwide removing geographical barriers.
Prolonged existence	One campaign prevails for a long time in case of traditional marketing. For e.g. TV ads.	Campaigns can be easily changed with ease and innovations can be introduced within any campaign.
Reach	Limited reach to the customer due to limited number of customer friendly technology.	Wider reach to the customer because of the use of various customer friendly technology.
Availability	24/7 year-round exposure is not possible in traditional marketing.	24/7 year-round exposure is possible through the use of internet technology in digital marketing.
Feedback	Traditional marketing involves One way conversation. Therefore no feedback from customers can be obtained.	Digital marketing involves Two ways conversation and hence there is a scope for feedback.

## TOOLS/ TECHNIQUES OF DIGITAL MARKETING

There are various tools by with the help of which digital marketing can be done. All forms operate through electronic devices. The most important elements of digital marketing are given below:

### 1. Direct E-Marketing

**Direct e-Marketing** is used to send a marketing message about your products, services or business to an email list. It is direct marketing using technology such as the internet and mobile phones and can be tailored to specific audiences. It is a cost effective way to send marketing messages to your current database customers and to potential customers through purchased lists. Email marketing and mobile marketing are an essential part of a strong relationship building marketing strategy, keeping your business in front of mind when it comes time for your customer to purchase.

Direct electronic marketing includes following elements:

- Online Advertising
- Email marketing,
- Mobile SMS/text marketing,
- Online advertising

Online advertising is a very important part of digital marketing. It is also called internet advertising through which company can deliver the message about the products or services. Internet-based advertising provides the content and ads that best matches to consumer interests. Publishers put about their products or services on their websites so that

consumers or users get free information. Advertisers should place more effective and relevant ads online. Through online advertising, company well controls its budget and it has full control on time.

#### *Email Marketing*

When message about the products or services is sent through email to the existing or potential consumer, it is defined as email marketing. Direct digital marketing is used to send ads, to build brand and customer loyalty, to build customer trust and to make brand awareness. Company can promote its products and services by using this element of digital marketing easily. It is relatively low cost comparing to advertising or other forms of media exposure. Company can bring complete attention of the customer by creating attractive mix of graphics, text and links on the products and services.

#### *Mobile SMS /Text Messaging*

It is a way to send information about the products and services from cellular and smart phone devices. By using phone devices, company can send information in the form of text (SMS), pictures, video or audio (MMS). Marketing through cellphone SMS (Short Message Service) became increasingly popular in the early 2000s in Europe and some parts of Asia. One can send order confirmations, shipping alerts using text message. Using SMS for campaigns get faster and more substantial results. Under this technique, companies can send marketing messages to their customers in real-time, any time and can be confident that the message will be seen. Company can create a questionnaire and obtain valuable customer

feedback essential to develop their products or services in future.

## 2. Marketing Using Social Media

Social media and social networking are relatively new phenomena, which are shaping the way some sectors of society communicate. The Internet has given us a virtual environment, which has wrapped its way around the planet and created a platform for a multitude of activities. **Social Media** allows your business to promote your organization, products and services via social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest and a host of other platforms. It allows your business to engage with your target audience and have real conversations in a public forum. Popular uses for businesses to incorporate social media into their business includes offering discounts to different audience segments, running competitions, providing customer service and inviting customer feedback while promoting your brand in a transparent way. It is a computer-based tool that allows people to create, exchange ideas, information and pictures about the company's product or services. According to Nielsen, internet users continue to spend more time with social media sites than any other type. For instance through Facebook, company can promote events concerning product and services, run promotions that comply with the. Through Twitter, company can increase the awareness and visibility of their brand. It is the best tool for the promotion of company's products and services. In LinkedIn, professionals write their profile and share information with others. Company can develop their profile in LinkedIn so that the professionals can view and can get more information about the company's product and services. It is not only simple social media network but also it is an authorship tool that links web-content directly with its owner.

## 3. Affiliate Marketing

**Affiliate Marketing** is a web-based marketing practice in which a business rewards one or more affiliates for each visitor or customer brought about by the affiliate's marketing efforts.

Affiliate marketing is a form of online advertising in which one business rewards another for placing advertising on their website. Each time a potential customer clicks on the link through to the originator of the advert website, the third party earns revenue. This approach originated on the PC Flowers & Gifts website and this company gains several thousand affiliates through the Worldwide Web. The third-party advertisers were paid commission on the referred business. Amazon expanded its business using a similar approach and continues to encourage everyone to advertise Amazon products through its affiliate program.

Affiliate marketing is also the name of the industry where a number of different types of companies and individuals are performing this form of internet marketing, including affiliate networks, affiliate management companies and in-house affiliate managers, specialized 3rd party vendors, and various types of affiliates/publishers who promote the products and services of their partners. Affiliate marketing overlaps with other internet marketing methods to some degree, because affiliates often use regular advertising methods. On the other hand, affiliates sometimes use less orthodox techniques like publishing reviews of products or services offered by a partner. In simplistic terms, affiliate marketing is the practice of driving traffic from one site to another in return for reward. 'Brand bidding' is the term used to describe the practice of affiliates

buying keywords on PPC programs relating directly to brands or trademarks, with the sole objective of driving traffic towards the brand site and generating income for the affiliate. Many marketers want to maintain control over their own brand names, believing that this is, in essence, their traffic to begin with and that affiliates or other partners should stay away from these particular keywords and focus on more 'long-tail' keyword phrases to drive traffic.

## 4. Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

**Search Engine Marketing (SEM)** is an effective way of directing traffic to your website. Search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo. Online advertising and search engine marketing aims to get a target customer to act immediately by clicking on the advert. These types of adverts include banner adverts, skyscrapers and pop-ups. They may be used to elicit various responses and meet a range of communications objectives, for example, increase action, change opinions, increase recall. Search engine marketing involves optimization of search listings and keyword searching. For instance, if searching Yahoo! using key words such as 'jewellery shop', the search engine will provide a list of companies offering such services. Yahoo! provides its Keyword Selector to help advertisers choose the best search term. Search engines like Yahoo! and Google generate revenue by charging each time an individual clicks on a sponsored link. The higher up the listing, higher is the price for click-through. It comprises of two tactics:

- a. **Pay per Click (PPC) advertising** is, a model of internet marketing in which advertisers pay a fee each time one of their ads is clicked. Essentially, it's a way of buying visits to your site, rather than attempting to "earn" those visits. Pay per click (PPC), also called cost per click, is an internet advertising model used to direct traffic to websites, in which advertisers pay the publisher (typically a website owner or a host of website) when the ad is clicked. It is defined simply as "the amount spent to get an advertisement clicked. With search engines, advertisers typically bid on keyword phrases relevant to their target market. Content sites commonly charge a fixed price per click rather than use a bidding system. PPC "display" advertisements, also known as "banner" ads, are shown on web sites or search engine results with related content that have agreed to show ads. In contrast to the generalized portal, which seeks to drive a high volume of traffic to one site, PPC implements the so-called affiliate model, which provides purchase opportunities wherever people may be surfing. It does this by offering financial incentives (in the form of a percentage of revenue) to affiliated partner sites. The affiliates provide purchase-point click-through to the merchant. It is a pay-for-performance model: If an affiliate does not generate sales, it represents no cost to the merchant. Variations include banner exchange, pay-per-click, and revenue sharing programs. Websites that utilize PPC ads will display an advertisement when a keyword query matches an advertiser's keyword list, or when a content site displays relevant content. Such advertisements are called sponsored links or sponsored ads, and appear adjacent to, above, or beneath organic results on search engine results pages, or anywhere

a web developer chooses on a content site. Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising is available on popular search engines such as Google, Bing or Yahoo! An advertiser is charged when their ad is clicked and a visitor lands on their website. PPC ads appear on either the Search network or Display network. Display Network ads appear on partner websites. It is a fast and direct way for businesses to start marketing online, with an immediate and measurable Return on Investment (ROI).

- b. **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** A second method of traffic building to a particular website is known as search engine optimization (SEO). This involves the achievement of the highest position in the natural listings on the search engine results pages after a keyword or phrase has been entered. The position depends on a calculation made by a search engine (e.g. Google) that matches the relevant site page content with the keyword (phrase) that is typed in. Unlike sponsored search (pay-per-click) SEO does not involve payment to a search engine to achieve high rankings. Therefore, digital marketer needs an understanding of how to achieve high natural rankings. Search engines use 'spiders' to identify the titles, links and headings that are employed to assess relevance to keywords and phrases. It is therefore important to ensure that the website includes the keywords (phrases) that a potential visitor might use to search for a particular type of company. Search Engine Optimizations (SEO) aims to make it easier for your potential customers to find you online, by improving the placement of your website in search results of search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo! for selected keywords relating to your business, products and services. The more search engines like your site, the better chance you have of it ranking highly in search results. SEO can be an effective strategy for driving traffic to your website - in the long run.

## 5. Buzz Marketing

**Buzz marketing** is defined as the passing of information about products and services by verbal or electronic means in an informal, person-to-person manner. It is also about identifying triggers that will prompt new conversations from target audiences. For example, in the USA Nintendo recruited suburban mothers to spread the word among their friends that the Wii was a gaming console that the whole family could enjoy together. Buzz marketing is similar to word-of-mouth marketing, long recognized as one of the most powerful forms of marketing, but it has enjoyed a renaissance due to advances in technology such as email, websites and mobile phones. The first step in a buzz marketing campaign involves identifying and targeting 'alphas' that is, the trendsetters that adopt new ideas and technologies early on and the 'bees', who are the early adopters. Brand awareness then passes from these customers to others, who seek to emulate the trendsetters. Celebrities may be paid to endorse products or simply popularize products through their own choice. Critical to the success of buzz marketing is that every social group, whether it is online or offline has trendsetters.

## 6. Websites

**Websites** are an important part of an organization's communication strategy. The Web offers a high degree of flexibility in terms of what can be created in a website along with supporting digital technologies, which have revolutionized how organizations communicate. Some organizations have developed highly sophisticated websites, which target various global audiences with an extensive range of product. However, others have been far more timid, developing small-scale, experimental applications: for example, the stark contrast between the reach and sophistication of Tesco.com compared to Morrison.co.uk.<sup>62</sup> Websites are potentially much more than a form of advertising as they can be used as an online store, an information repository, a portal or gateway for many different services.

*Two examples of website types are:*

1. **Intermediary websites:** These act as a portal or gateway to a variety of content. Examples are: **Mainstream news media sites** or portals. These include traditional, for example, FT.com, Times, Guardian, Pureplay, Google news. **Social network sites**, for example, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Bebo, Tagged. **Price comparison sites** (also known as aggregators), for example, Moneysupermarket, Kelkoo, Shopping.com, confused.com, mysupermarket.com.
2. **Destination sites:** These are the sites that the marketer is trying to generate visitors for and which may be transactional sites: for example, retailers such as John Lewis Partnership; financial services like Aviva.com; travel companies like ryanair.com, manufacturer's brands like Procter & Gamble.

Therefore, Information technologies and e-marketing offer a wide range of opportunities to projects and business development. Moreover, they provide possibilities for external growth (more sales, new business models, new ways of selling and/or communicating) as well as internal growth (higher productivity, increased margin, optimum relationship with customer and/or affiliated channel). However, due to the inner complexity and the fast pace moving of technologies, lots of organizations cannot optimize and get the best return on investment (ROI) in their technological projects. Marketers should work to incorporate technologies to improve the marketing efficiency, develop a new business unit or complement sales coverage. Digital marketing tools discussed above will help them to take advantage of technologies in directing and planning the digital marketing project development keeping focus on constant growth.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Digital marketing channel in marketing has become essential part of strategy of many companies. Nowadays, even for small business owner there is a very cheap and efficient way to market products or services of companies. Digital marketing has no boundaries in the coming era. Company can use any devices such as smart phones, tablets, laptops, televisions, game consoles, digital billboards, and media such as social media, SEO (search engine optimization), videos, content, e-mail and lot more to promote company itself and its products and services. Digital marketing may succeed more if it considers user needs as a top priority. The watchwords "test,

learn and evolve” should be at the heart of all digital marketing initiatives. Companies should create innovative customer

experiences and specific strategies for media to identify the best path for driving up digital marketing performance.

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